

The Red Door School



Enrolment Policy

Approved by Board of Management: 26th October 2016

Revised on: 30th November 2017

Next Review date: November 2018

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Enrolment Policy

1. Introduction

The Red Door School under the patronage of Autism Ireland is a Special School funded by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) for children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder and complex needs. The school welcomes any referrals for enrolment to the school for any student aged between 4 and 18 years of age who has a confirmed primary diagnosis of autism or has a single diagnosis on the Autism Spectrum (as per DSM-IV or ICD-10 criteria by a certified psychologist)¹ in accordance with the policies and procedures more fully defined below. This enrolment policy is set out in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000, the Equal Status Act 2000, the Disabilities Act 2005, the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 (the EPSEN Act 2004) and the rules for national schools as updated by relevant DES circulars. Parents/guardians who require clarification of any aspect of the policy should contact the Chairperson of the school's Board of Management (BoM), the Principal, or Director of Education. Contact details can be obtained through the main school reception (01) 6637532 or by email at info@thereddoorschool.com.

2. General Information

The Red Door School provides an education for pupils with Autism and Complex Needs from Junior Infants to Sixth Year (4-18 years of age). It is co-educational and non-denominational. The school provides autism specific education, using evidence based, data driven education interventions, including Applied Behaviour Analysis, by appropriately qualified professional staff. Any differentiation of the curriculum or development of other programmes of education will be informed by assessment of individual pupils' broad spectrum of need as detailed in their Individual Education Plans (IEP) which have been agreed annually between school, home and other professionals. The school depends on the grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills.

3. Application for Enrolment Procedure

Parents/Guardians can obtain Enrolment Application Forms from the Administrative Assistant at The Red Door School or download from the school website.

Before an application is made, parents/guardians should ensure that:

- 1) The child will be at least 4 years of age on or before the 1st September in the year which the proposed enrolment date falls.
- 2) The child has a recent (dated within 2 years of date of enrollment) documented and confirmed diagnosis on the Autism Spectrum² (please see footnote below) and a recommendation that they attend a special school.
- 3) The Enrolment Application Form is completely filled out.

¹ Assessment and classification of autism or autistic spectrum disorder by a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist using DSM-IV or ICD-10 criteria OR multi-disciplinary assessment of same by a professional team [including a clinical psychologist/ educational psychologist].

² Assessment and classification of autism or autistic spectrum disorder by a psychiatrist or clinical psychologist using DSM-IV or ICD-10 criteria OR multi-disciplinary assessment of same by a professional team [including a clinical psychologist].

- 4) All supporting documentation that ensures a complete overview of the child is attached to the application form, including current pre-school/school placement reports, home tuition reports, psychological reports, medical reports, speech and language reports, occupational therapy reports and/or behavioural support plans.
- 5) The child is living within a reasonable distance of the school and travel time is within acceptable parameters between home and school facilities³ (please see footnote below). Proof of address in the form of a utility bill dated within the last 6 months must be provided.

Completed Enrolment Application Forms should be returned to:

Principal
The Red Door School
Monkstown Grove, Monkstown Avenue,
Monkstown, Co. Dublin.

NB:

- Failure to fully complete forms may result in refusal to admit a student.
- It is the sole responsibility of parents/guardians to inform school of any change of address or other contact details in order to remain contactable should a place become available while on waitlist. The school will not be held responsible for failure to make contact if contact details are incorrect.
- Further relevant information may be sought at a later stage (eg. Updated professional reports)
- In applying the criteria for enrolment, the school will take into account limitations in the size and age profile of classes

Admission to the school is, of course, subject to the resources available to the school including classroom accommodation, class size, teaching resources and financial resources, and subject to the capacity of the school to provide for the needs of those who apply for admission. Where the school lacks the necessary resources to meet the needs of any applicant or student, it will make every reasonable effort to secure those resources - where the resources cannot be secured on a reasonable basis, the school reserves the unfettered right to refuse admission. It is the responsibility of parents / guardians of any child to inform the school of any such needs on the Enrolment Application form for the child's own welfare. In this context the school authorities will have equal regard for the welfare of all the students and their right to an education in an atmosphere that is not detrimental to their physical, emotional, moral, social or intellectual development. Failure to fully complete the Enrolment Application Form, failure to supply any relevant information requested by the school or failure to make reasonable arrangements to meet with the school authorities to discuss the application may result in a child being refused admission to the school.

³ Reasonable distance will be defined in accordance with the DES transportation department and the normal special school transport scheme for pupils.

On receipt of completed Enrolment Application Forms:

- 1) The Principal will check that the Enrolment Application Form is complete along with all required supporting documentation. If it is not, the parents/guardians will be contacted to request the additional information. Note that applications will not be processed until all the required information is received by the School.
- 2) The Principal endorses each completed enrolment application with an enrolment number. If more than one application is received on the same day, they are ordered by post-date on the envelope. If the post date is the same, they are numbered according to the chronological age of the pupils seeking enrolment.
- 3) Each applicant is placed on the Enrolment Waiting List according to the enrolment admissions number. If parents have twins or triplets, the children will be put on the list one after the other.
- 4) Upon receipt of the complete application package, the School Principal will send an acknowledgment to parents/guardians to notify the family of the date the application was processed.

The Waiting List

Only applications meeting The Red Door School criteria for enrolment will be added to the Waiting List.

1. Priority is given to brothers and sisters of children already in the school or who have previously attended the school. These children will be placed at the top of the waiting list.
2. Priority will be given to children of current staff on DES payroll. These children will be placed at the top of the waiting list, behind category 1 above.
3. All other applications meeting The Red Door School criteria for enrolment will be added in order of date received.

No guarantee of a school place is given or implied by inclusion on the Enrolment Waiting List.

It is the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the school of any change of address or other contact details, in order to remain contactable should a place become available while on the Enrolment Waiting List.

4. Enrolment Criteria

The decision to admit new entrants into the school will be made with the understanding of the resources available within the school community to meet the unique needs of each child admitted and, in particular, the children already enrolled in the school. Decisions as to enrolment therefore require balanced judgements, guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interests of all children affected, or potentially affected by such decisions.

The school enrolment policy must also uphold the framework of the relevant legislation set forth for special schools. As such, attention is drawn to Section 2 of the EPSEN ACT 2004, which provides that a child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive setting unless such an arrangement is inconsistent with the best interests of the child or with the effective provision of education for those children with whom the child is to be educated.

A place will generally become available at the Red Door School when a pupil leaves the school.

When a place within the school becomes available, the Board of Management, or a sub-committee of the Board, will consider the 5 applicants at the top of the waiting list. The Board or committee will take into account the distance between the child's home and the school will be taken into account, with families in the immediate area of the school locality generally given preference.

If the Board/committee considers that none of the 5 applicants meet the above criteria, they will consider the next 5 applicants on the waiting list.

It should be noted that within the above criteria the Board of Management would consider the following:

1. the school's ability to cater for the needs of the applicant without diluting the resources necessary for continued service provision for existing pupils
2. Whether the child's age fits with the age of the children in the classroom where a place has become available. If the child's age does not match the profile then the child will retain their place on the Enrolment Waiting List.
3. the willingness of the parents/guardians of the applicants to support the educational programs outside of the school environment – a meeting between parents, child, Principal and Behaviour Analyst must occur prior to a place being offered.

Procedure for placement being offered.

1. **Board of Management/sub committee of Board.**
 - When a place within the school becomes available, the Board of Management, or a sub-committee of the Board, will consider the 5 applicants at the top of the waiting list on the basis of the schools enrolment criteria and will decide whether to offer a place to the child, based on the school's ability to cater for the needs of the child without diluting the resources necessary for continued service provision for existing pupils, and the willingness of the parents to support the educational programs outside of the school environment. The Principal will be given approval to formally proceed with enrolment.
2. **Invitation to meeting:**
 - In advance of an applicant being offered a place, the Principal will invite the parents and child (if possible) to attend a meeting at the school with the Principal and the Behaviour Analyst. The purpose of the meeting is to answer any questions parents may have about the school, and for the school to better understand the needs of the child and the willingness of the parents to support the educational programs outside of the school environment.
 - Invitation will be arranged in the first instance by phonecall, both contact numbers provided will be attempted, if unsuccessful, an invitation will be issued via the e-mail addresses provided on the Enrolment Application Form.
 - If parents do not wish to attend a meeting or do not respond within 3 working days from date of attempted contact then the child will retain their place on waiting list and the next eligible child will be contacted from the Enrolment Waiting List.
 - No placement will be offered to a child from the Enrolment Waiting List without a meeting between Principal, Behaviour Analyst and parents taking place.

- If parents fail to respond to invitation on 3 separate occasions a letter will issue requesting parents to confirm whether they wish to retain child's place on the Enrolment Waiting List.
- If no response is received within 14 days from issue of letter the child's name will be removed from the Enrolment Waiting List.

3. Observation of child:

- Ideally an opportunity will be arranged for Behaviour Analyst, Principal or class teacher to visit child in current placement in order to determine resources required in the school. If this is not possible the child will be invited to attend the parent meeting at the school.

4. Offer of Place

- The Principal will write to the parents within 14 days of the parents meeting with school and inform them whether or not the school can offer their child a place. If the parents turn down the place or do not accept the place within 14 days, the enrolment procedure begins again. If an offer of a school place is not accepted by parents within 14 days then the offer is forfeited and the child is removed from the Enrolment Waiting List.
- Parents/guardians cannot defer a place which has been offered to them.

Note that if the BoM believes that an applicant requires further resources not already available in the school (e.g. Visiting Teacher, Special Needs Assistant, specialised equipment or furniture, transport services), then a formal request will be submitted to the Department of Education and Skills to provide resources required to meet the needs of the applicant which will be accompanied by the relevant report. Thus, it may be necessary to defer certain enrolments pending the provision of appropriate resources by the Department of Education & Skills.

Parents/guardians cannot defer a place which has been offered to them. However, parents/guardians may submit a new Enrolment Application Form and begin a new placement on the Enrolment Waiting List if they feel the timing of a placement does not fit with their child's needs at any given time.

5. Transition into the Red Door School

On occasion, children may transfer into Red Door School from a different school or community service provider. Should this be the case, the transition period to The Red Door School will be determined at the discretion of the Principal and Director of Education and teacher in consultation with the family and previous educational providers. The decision of type and length of transition should be based on the individual needs of the child and the overall welfare of current students.

6. Appeals

Where a Board of Management refuses to enrol a student in a school, the parent of a student has a statutory entitlement under Section 29 of the Education Act (as amended by Section 4 of the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2007, to appeal that decision to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science. A committee is established to hear the appeal. In most cases appeals must be dealt with within 30 days. Where appropriate, the Secretary General may give whatever directions to the Board of Management that are considered necessary to remedy the matter complained of.

Details on appealing decisions on enrolment under Section 29 of the Education Act (as amended by Section 4 of the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2007) are available at www.education.ie

Parents who are refused enrolment will be informed of this right to appeal by the Chairperson of the Board of Management in the letter refusing enrolment.

7. Placement Review

Occasionally, concerns' regarding the suitability of a child's continued attendance at the school may arise. In such circumstances, a review of the school's ability to continue to meet the child's needs, safety and the safety of others may be necessary. Any such review will be undertaken by a committee appointed by the BoM in conjunction with the Principal, Director of Education and other relevant staff members. Parents/guardians should be kept informed of any concerns that might arise in relation to their child's continued attendance at the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents/guardians will also be given an opportunity to engage in a discussion surrounding the placement of the child and concerns that arise from the case itself. In the event that it is determined that the child is not suitably placed in the school, having regard for the realistic service options available at the time, the BoM may request a multi-disciplinary team assessment be carried out to determine the best options for the specific child.

Removal of student from school roll

The Red Door School is obliged under *The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000* to keep an accurate and updated account of the enrolment and attendance of students. Such records are subject to monitoring by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB). Schools also have an obligation to inform the NEWB of the absence of any student for a period in excess of 20 days in any school year. A child's name can be removed from the school registrar should they not be attending on a regular and/or consistent basis.

Where a child is absent from The Red Door School during part of a school day, or for a school day or more than a school day, the parent of such child shall, in accordance with procedures specified in the code of behaviour of the school, notify the principal of the school of the reasons for the child's absence. The Board of Management shall not remove a child's name from the register solely on the grounds that the child concerned is prevented from receiving a certain minimum education due to illness.

The re-enrolment of a student who has been removed from the roll is a decision for the BoM to be taken in accordance with this enrolment policy and all relevant DES documents and/or policies.

Code of Behaviour

Parents/guardians of children enrolled in The Red Door School, the members of the BoM, staff members and external consultants and volunteers are required to co-operate and support the school's Code of Behaviour and all other policies and curricular organisation approved by the school's BoM.. The BoM trust that parents/guardians will also work collaboratively with school staff as they assist the students themselves in their effort to uphold the student Code of Behaviour. The BoM also expects that parents/guardians of children seeking to enter the school demonstrate the same positive collaboration and supportiveness to the staff and BOM

8. Policy Review

It is fully acknowledged by all parties that this enrolment policy will be reviewed from time to time to ensure that it is kept up to date and that it retains its relevance. Ongoing evaluation and new approaches to education, Ministry guidelines and DES agreements may require this document be modified. Applications will be considered based on the Enrolment Policy in place at the time a place in the school becomes available.